

CLAIMS

1. A system for the measurement, in real time, of the instantaneous flow of a fluid in steady or unsteady motion in a conduit, characterised in that it includes:

- a flow-velocity measuring device (1) placed in the conduit, where the said flow-velocity measuring device (1) is equipped with two pressure take-offs (A, B) in the wall,
- a pressure-difference measuring device (2) designed to be connected to two pressure take-offs (A, B),
- a calculation resource (3) designed to calculate flow, in real time, by solving an equation that relates the instantaneous flow to the pressure difference, where the latter is positive or negative in the said equation depending on variations in the speed of fluid flow in the conduit and/or the direction of the fluid flow.

2. A system according to claim 1, characterised in that the equation includes a term representing the instantaneous flow; and a term representing the differential coefficient with time of the instantaneous flow, where each of these two terms can be positive or negative.

3. A system according to claim 1 or claim 2, characterised in that the equation taking account of the direction of the flow is a differential equation of the form:

$$dq(t)/dt + \alpha(q(t)) = \beta \times \Delta p(t),$$

where

- $q(t)$ represents the wanted instantaneous flow,
- $dq(t)/dt$ represents the differential coefficient with time of the wanted instantaneous flow,
- $\alpha(q(t))$ represents a function that depends on the geometry of the system, of the fluid and of the flow $q(t)$,
- β represents a coefficient that depends on the geometry of the device,

$\Delta p(t)$ represents the measured instantaneous pressure difference.

4. A system according to any of the preceding claims,
5 characterised in that it also includes a temperature measuring probe.

5. A system according to claim 3, characterised in that
10 the calculation resource is designed to ascertain the density of the fluid by having the temperature measured by the temperature measuring probe and calculating the instantaneous mass flow of the fluid.

6. A system according to claim 3 or 4, characterised in
15 that it also includes a probe for measuring absolute static pressure.

7. A system according to claim 5, characterised in that
20 the calculation resource (3) is designed to calculate, in real time, the instantaneous mass flow of a fluid that is compressible in real time, by means of an absolute static pressure measurement and a temperature measurement, and by solving the equation relating the instantaneous flow to the pressure difference, where the said equation takes account of
25 the direction of the fluid flow.

8. A system according to any of the preceding claims,
characterised in that the flow-velocity measuring device is a
30 narrowing tube.

9. A system according to any of the preceding claims,
characterised in that the flow-velocity measuring device (1)
is a diaphragm.

35 10. A system according to any of the preceding claims,
characterised in that the flow-velocity measuring device (1)
is a venturi.

11. A system according to any of the preceding claims, characterised in that the pressure difference measuring device (2) is a differential pressure sensor connected to the two pressure take-offs.

12. A system according to any of claims 1 to 9, characterised in that the means of measuring a pressure difference is a set of two relative pressure sensors connected to the two pressure take-offs.

13. A system according to any of the preceding claims, characterised in that the calculation resource (3) is an analogue or digital electronic calculator.

14. A system according to claim 13, characterised in that the calculation resource includes a first amplifier (7) connected to a first input of a subtractor (8), an integrator (9) connected to an output of the subtractor (8), a feedback loop connected between an output of the integrator (9) and a second input of the subtractor (8), where the feedback loop includes a module (10) producing the absolute value function connected to the output of the integrator (9), and a multiplier (11) which is connected by a first input to an output of the module (10) and by a second input to the output of the integrator (9).

15. A process for measuring the flow of a fluid in steady or unsteady motion in a conduit, characterised in that it includes the following stages:

- measurement of a difference between two pressures, irrespective of fluctuations in the flow,
- calculation of the flow of the fluid by solving an equation relating the flow and the pressure difference, where the latter is positive or negative in the said equation depending on variation of the speed of the fluid flow in the conduit and/or the direction of the fluid flow.

16. A process according to claim 15, characterised in that the equation includes a term representing the pressure difference, a term representing the instantaneous flow, and a term representing the differential coefficient with time of the instantaneous flow, where each of these three terms can be positive or negative.

17. A process according to claim 15 or claim 16, characterised in that the second stage of the process consists of calculating the flow of the fluid in unsteady motion by solving a differential equation relating the flow and the measured pressure difference:

$$dq(t)/dt + \alpha(q(t)) = \beta \times \Delta p(t),$$

where

$q(t)$ represents the wanted instantaneous flow,
 $dq(t)/dt$ represents the differential coefficient with time of the wanted instantaneous flow,
 $\alpha(q(t))$ represents a function that depends on the geometry of the system, the fluid and the instantaneous flow $q(t)$,
 β represents a coefficient that depends on the geometry of the device,
 $\Delta p(t)$ represents the measured instantaneous pressure difference.

18. A process according to claim 17, characterised in that the direction of the flow is included in the term $\alpha(q(t))$ which depends on the geometry of the system and the flow $q(t)$.

19. A process according to any of claims 15 to 18, characterised in that it also includes a stage for acquisition of the fluid temperature:

20. A process according to any of claims 15 to 19, characterised in that it also includes a stage for acquisition of the absolute static pressure of the fluid.

21. A process according to claims 19 and 20, characterised in that the fluid temperature and the absolute static pressure of the fluid are included in the equation
5 taking account of the direction of the flow.

22. A process according to claim 21, characterised in that it allows the calculation, in real time, of the instantaneous flow of a compressible fluid in unsteady motion
10 in a conduit, where the said flow calculation is achieved by solving an equation relating the flow to the pressure difference, the absolute static pressure of the fluid, and the fluid temperature.